

Date: November 28, 2005

To:	WyAnn Northrop	Amy Reneee McCord
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From: Bob Runkel

Regarding: State Performance Plan (**Immediate response requested today, November 28**)

Thank you for your hard work during our Advisory Panel meeting on November 17 and 18, 2005. Your care and thoughtfulness in helping us establish targets for our State Performance Plan (SPP) is appreciated.

We have incorporated your suggestions and many of the improvement activities suggested by the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Panel. Additionally, we made a few necessary edits and expect that we will be mailing the final document to the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs on Thursday, December 1, 2005, which is one day before the deadline.

Last week, we spoke with Ruth Rider, Division Director for the Monitoring and State Improvement Planning Division of the OSEP. We called Ruth for the purpose of obtaining clarification on one of the performance indicators and its corresponding target. Ruth clarified the measurement method needed to calculate target 3 A. Target 3 A addresses the percent of districts meeting the state's annual yearly progress (AYP) objectives under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) for academic progress for the disability subgroup.

Ruth clarified that the only schools to be used when calculating the baseline and setting the targets for this indicator are those schools with a disability subgroup large enough to meet the state's minimum "N" when calculating AYP under NCLB. As a result of this clarification, we needed to recalibrate our targets for this indicator. The new method of calculation changes the percentage of districts we anticipate will meet the state's AYP objectives in each of the six years of the SPP.

Prior to proceeding with a modification to this indicator, we ask that you review our proposed change and indicate whether you concur with the change or would suggest a revision to the target. If you concur, simply reply to this message by saying "okay." When you reply to the e-mail message, if you feel comfortable, please use the "reply to all" button on your e-mail system so that other members of the Advisory Panel are aware of your approval or of any concern that you might have with the proposed target. If you have concerns, please suggest rewording. If anyone suggests a rewording, we will again ask the Advisory Panel members that were present for the November 18 and 19 meeting to consider for approval, the suggested rewording.

Following is the rationale we used when developing this revised target:

The measurement standard for Target A reads: "Percent = # of districts meeting the state's AYP objectives for progress for the disability subgroup (children with IEPs) divided by the total # of districts in the state times 100." The OSEP instructions for this measurement standard specify: "In (Target) A include only districts that have a disability subgroup that meets the state's minimum "n" size.

The state's method of calculating AYP includes the use of a minimum "N" of 40. Because Montana has an extraordinarily high proportion of small school districts, only 16 districts out of 436 districts, evaluated for AYP, had an N of 40 or greater for the disability subgroup. Therefore, when using OSEP instructions for indicator A, only 3.7% of Montana school districts are included in the calculation.

The percent of districts meeting the state's AYP objectives is heavily impacted by the methodology used to calculate AYP, including the use of a minimum N and other methodologies. The other methodologies include a system of using multiple measures for determining AYP known as the All Schools Accountability Process (ASAP). The ASAP process involves the use of multiple weighted factors in the calculation, including factors such as the quality of Five-Year Comprehensive Plans when determining AYP.

At the time of the adoption of this target, Montana had not received final approval for the ASAP methodology for calculating AYP for 2005 (2004-2005 school year assessment data). Therefore, if an approved calculation procedure requires a revised method for AYP calculation for 2005, thereby establishing new baseline data, it will be necessary to recalibrate this target.

When using the state's ASAP for calculating AYP, all 16 schools, with an N of 40 or greater, achieved AYP for 2005. This methodology results in an extraordinarily high proportion (100%) of Montana schools achieving AYP objectives for the disability subgroup. At best, the ASAP process applied to the OSEP measurement standard provides an incomplete picture of the performance of students with disabilities.

Trend line data is not available when setting targets due to the significant changes that occurred in the methodology used for AYP calculation between 2004 and 2005 and because disaggregated enrollment numbers for the disability group were not gathered until 2005. Therefore, only AYP determinations for 2005 were used when setting targets. Targets have been set anticipating slippage because of the following factors:

- Montana uses a stair step method in setting the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO). The AMO is the percentage of students achieving proficiency which is used in calculating AYP. A significant stair step increase will occur with the 2006 AYP determination in the percentage of students that must achieve proficiency for the district to reach the AMO. This method of calculating AYP establishes a rigorous standard for improvement in the percent of students scoring proficient which is necessary for the district to achieve AYP. As a result, Target A is not static and a decrease in the percentage of schools achieving AYP is likely to occur even though the performance of students may show an incremental increase.
- Grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 will be tested for the first time during the 2005-2006 school year. This will substantially increase the number of districts that will have an N greater than 40. The larger the number of districts required to meet the target the greater the likelihood that one or more of those districts may not achieve AYP.
- Sixteen districts out of 436 districts represent an extremely small sample group that is not representative of all districts in the state. It is reasonable to expect that less than 100% of the districts would achieve AYP for any year. The 16 districts are likely to be a statistical anomaly.

What follows is the proposed target language we suggest for this indicator:

	Measurable and Rigorous Target
2005 (2005-2006)	A. Within a 95% confidence interval, 80% of districts will meet the state's AYP objectives for progress for the disability subgroup when using AYP calculation methodologies in effect on 11/18/05.
2006 (2006-2007)	A. Within a 95% confidence interval, 80% of districts will meet the state's AYP objectives for progress for the disability subgroup when using AYP calculation methodologies in effect on 11/18/05.
2007 (2007-2008)	A Within a 95% confidence interval, 80 % of districts will meet the state's AYP objectives for progress for the disability subgroup when using AYP calculation methodologies in effect on 11/18/05.
2008 (2008-2009)	A. Within a 95% confidence interval, 90% of districts will meet the state's AYP objectives for progress for the disability subgroup when using AYP calculation methodologies in effect on 11/18/05.
2009 (2009-2010)	A. Within a 95% confidence interval 95% of districts will meet the state's AYP objectives for progress for the disability subgroup when using AYP calculation methodologies in effect on 11/18/05.
2010 (2010-2011)	A. Within a 95% confidence interval, 100% of districts will meet the state's AYP objectives for progress for the disability subgroup when using AYP calculation methodologies in effect on 11/18/05.

If you have questions concerning this indicator, or its proposed target, please feel free to call me at 444-4429 or Marilyn Pearson at 444-4428. If you feel comfortable with approving the proposed language for the indicator as it is stated above, simply reply by saying "okay." If you have concerns and would like to suggest alternate language, please let us know.

If you would prefer to respond to this message via telephone instead of e-mail, please call Marilyn or me.